

Mational Intelligence Council 16 February 1983 Cy of
Peputy Director of Central Intelligence FROM: Major General Edward B. Atkeson, USA National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces SUBJECT: Intelligence on the Salvadoran War and the
National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces SUBJECT: Intelligence on the Salvadoran War and the
Utility of US Assistance
1. There is general agreement in the Intelligence Communit that the war in El Salvador is likely to drag on for the foreseeable future as an essential stalemate. While both sides are deemed capable of achieving occasional local successessome perhaps even spectacularthe overall military balance is assessed as even.
2. However comfortable we may be with our principal judgment, we should bear in mind that much of our information is derived from a rather narrow evidential base, and could be off bear considerable margin. For example, while the Community has cited 4,000 to 5,000 full-time, hard-core guerrilla strength figures for the past year, individual estimates stretch from as low as 3,000 to as high as 10,000. Current thinking within the Community is to widen the official straddle to between 4,000 and 6,000 to reflect our doubt. Evidence regarding insurgent strength has never been strong, and in the months since the election it has eroded.
Estimates of local guerrilla militia strength are even softer, with a 5,000- to 10,000-man spread. 3. An unfortunate aspect of the war from an intelligence

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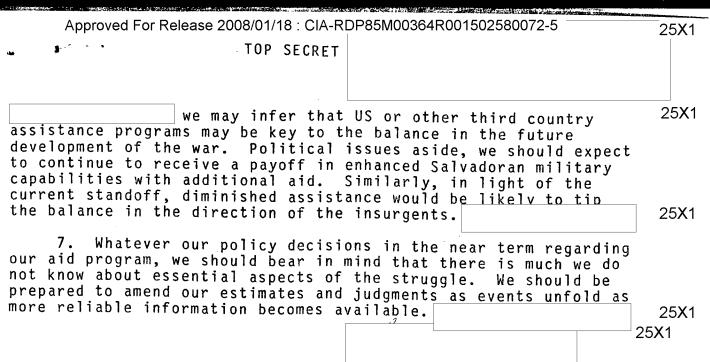
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for Edward B. Atkeson

